From Worldly Powers to Jīvanmukti: Ritual and Soteriology in the Early *Tantra*s of the Cult of Tripurasundarī

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Abstract: This article diachronically charts the distinctive soteriologies articulated in the earliest scriptures of the cult of Tripurasundarī, a popular transregional Śākta tradition, which was promulgated in south India as Śrīvidyā. First, I analyse contexts, beginning in the tenth-century CE, in which words for liberation (mukti and mokṣa) were discussed in the unpublished tantras of the antecedent Nityā cult and the Vāmakeśvarīmata, a foundational text of the cult of Tripurasundarī. Although these texts eulogised the transcendent aspect of the Goddess, they exhibited little interest in salvific practices. In contrast, the later Yoginīhṛdaya emphasised the soteriological meaning of practices, embracing internalised, meditative techniques dedicated to the realisation of liberation during one's lifetime (jīvanmukti), associated with non-dual Śaivism. I argue that the Yoginīhṛdaya built on the existing ritual and mantra system and developed it toward a sophisticated and robust doctrine by which adherents deepened the resilience and longevity of this ritual tradition.

Introduction

Now known as Śrīvidyā,[1] the popular trans-regional worship of the Goddess Tripurasundarī[2] is arguably the most popular ritual Hindu tantric tradition, which has significantly influenced institutional and devotional life in South Asia and the diaspora.[3] In India, leaders of Śaṅkara *māṭha*s (major temple and monastic institutions) are Śrīvidyā gurus and initiates; hymns to its principal Goddess are chanted daily by millions of women; and the Śrīcakra, its distinctive ritual diagram, adorns the covers of numerous books on Tantra. In December of 2018, a high-profile international conference on Śākta Tantra 'with Special Reference to Srividya Tradition' at the Sanchi University of Buddhist-Indic Studies in Madhya Pradesh was attended by hundreds of scholars from across the globe. The conference was a major event, recognised by India's Prime Minister and Vice President, and attended by the Governor of Madhya Pradesh. And yet, despite strong interest in Śrīvidyā, its early history remains understudied.

Here, I discuss how conceptions of liberation developed and evolved in the formation of this tradition. I analyse changes and continuities in the use of liberation (*mukti* and *mokṣa*), and, later, *jīvanmukti* (liberation-while-living), as the worship of Tripurasundarī developed from that of Kāmeśvarī in the Nityā cult and was reinterpreted in the language of non-dual Śaivism. Liberation plays different roles in the texts of the antecedent Nityā cult two foundational *tantras* (scriptural texts) of the cult of Tripurasundarī: the *Vāmakeśvarīmata* (VM) and the *Yoginīhṛdaya* (YH). The VM, also known as the *Nityāṣodaśikārṇava*, likely dates prior to mid-eleventh-century CE. The YH was redacted c. mid-eleventh century after the Trika Śaiva adepts Abhinavagupta (fl. c. 975–1025 CE) and Kṣemarāja (fl. c. 1000–50 CE) were active.[4] Although both the VM and YH have been previously translated,[5] a systematic study of their ritual systems, cosmology, and practices within the development of the cult of Tripurasundarī has not yet been undertaken.

Traditionally, the VM and the YH are considered parts of a single text. In fact, the YH commences with a framing dialogue between Bhairava, a form of Śiva, and the Goddess that appeals to the VM.

> devadeva mahādeva paripūrṇaprathāmaya |
> vāmakeśvaratantre 'sminn ajñātārthās tv anekaśaḥ ‖ YH 1.1 ‖
> tāṃs tān arthān aśeṣeṇa vaktum arhasi bhairava | YH 1.2 ab |[6]

O God of Gods, the great God, who is filled with complete expansion (of knowledge). In the *Vāmakeśvaratantra* there are many points that are unknown. O Bhairava, please speak exhaustively about all of these subjects.

Given the well-known tendency within Sanskritic traditions to hold knowledge as eternal and unchangeable,[7] it can be inferred that the anonymous redactors of the YH intentionally grounded their innovations in the dialogue between Śiva and the Goddess featured in the VM. Despite the traditional reading of the VM and YH as two parts of a whole, these *tantras* are clearly products of different milieus.[8]

The VM, like earlier works of the Nityā cult, exhibits little interest in supramundane matters. The YH, however, posits an explicitly Trika-influenced non-dualist philosophy while adding a system of internalised yogic practices to the existing ritual structure, described in the VM. Indeed, in contrast to the VM, the yogic and meditative disciplines of the YH are centred on the realisation of liberation-while-living (*jīvanmukti*), a soteriological goal associated with the non-dual stream of Śaivism.[9] Before turning to important registers of Pratyabhijñā philosophy in the YH and how these play out in specific yogic and contemplative disciplines aimed at *jīvanmukti*, I establish a background in which to situate the diachronic development of soteriology in the Nityā and Tripurasundarī traditions. I first briefly examine the subordination of liberation, transcendence, and yogic practices to obtaining mundane benefits in the *Ciñciṇīmatasārasamuccaya* (CMSS) and the *Nityākaula* (NK), the latter being the oldest attestation of the Nityā cult,

antecedent to the cult of Tripurasundarī. I then demonstrate the symbolic place of liberation within the threefold system of *tattva*s (elements or principles of reality) within a larger system of triadic equivalencies in the VM. Despite the primarily this-worldly[10] orientation of this text, the threefold structure laid out in the VM serves as the matrix elaborated and built upon in the YH. From this foundation, I situate the esoteric exegesis and soteriological praxeology of the YH within the context of post-Kṣemarāja non-dual Śaivism.

Enjoyment, supernatural powers, and liberation in the Nityā cult

The Nityā cult and the cult of Tripurasundarī are the latest among the Śākta Śaiva traditions to emerge.[11] Both are classified as Kaula, that is, influenced by the emergence of the path of the Goddess Clans (Kulamārga), and organised within the scheme directional Āmnāyas (lineages, teachings, transmissions).[12] As I argue elsewhere, despite a distinct and much more complex ritual system in the cult of Tripurasundarī, continuities between the Nityā cult and the cult of Tripurasundarī abound.[13] Among the similarities is the attitude expressed in these texts towards liberation.

A syncretic text of the Kubjikā cult, the CMSS records a variant of the Nityā cult as the southern transmission. Kāmeśvarī (the Goddess of Desire), the principal Goddess in the section on the Nityā cult, is described as a sexual being.[14] Similar to later descriptions of Tripurasundarī in the VM, the Goddess's sensuality here is intertwined with the sublime. Thus, Kāmeśvarī, who 'arises in the centre of the three seats' (*pīṭha*s),[15] is described as the 'embodiment of ultimate reality' (*tripīṭhodbhavamadhyasthā satsvabhāvānurupiṇī*, CMSS 102) who is worshipped by female adepts (*yoginī*s) and perfected beings (*siddha*s) (CMSS 108). As the epitome of mundane, supreme, and supernatural perfection, the Goddess grants an attainment of supernatural powers (*siddhi*s), enjoyment (*bhukti*), and, finally, liberation (*mukti*). Introducing this teaching in the CMSS, Bhairava proclaims

> *punar anyaṃ pravakṣyāmi dakṣiṇaṃ gharam*[16] *uttamam* |
> *mahāsiddhipradaṃ divyaṃ bhuktimuktiphalapradaṃ* ‖ CMSS 101 ‖[17]

> And I will tell you of another excellent [transmission] of the Southern order. Divine, it grants great supernatural powers and the fruit of enjoyment and liberation.

However, while the CMSS promises liberation, when its fruition would be achieved, or what precisely it would entail, is not specified.

The NK, a text from within the Nityā cult, surviving in a single manuscript, similarly designates the Goddess's reign over the mundane, the supreme, and everything in between. In this *tantra*, three forms of the Goddess are associated with a threefold organisation of practices further developed in the VM, as

I discuss in the next section. The three forms in the NK include a 'red Goddess' with physical attributes, entourage, and chariot (NK 5.38–39), an intermediate form shaped like a coil (*kuṇḍala*), that is, the serpentine energy (*kuṇḍalinī*) associated with yogic practices (NK 5.45), and, finally, a third, transcendent, Goddess.[18]

Numerous practices, referred to in this text as *dhāraṇa*s (focused visualisations), propitiate the first form of the Goddess and promise initiates mastery over the material world. For the intermediate form (*kuṇḍalinī*), the NK includes a number of yogic practices, which entail visualisations of *cakra*s (power centres, lit. wheels) and *marman*s (vital points).

However, benefits to be achieved by these practices (amorous attraction, eloquence, protection, etc.) also reflect primarily this-worldly orientation. Meditation on the transcendent form of the Goddess is given the least amount of space in this text, in keeping with its interest in mundane benefits and supernatural powers. However, the NK does provide a brief description of this meditation (or rather what it is devoid of).

> *na mano nāpi mantavyo na mantā [caiva pārvati]*[19] ‖ NK 5.45 cd ‖
> *sarvatattvavinirmuktaṃ sarvakāryavivarjitam* |
> *sarvādhāravinirmuktaṃ sarvakāraṇavarjitam* ‖ NK 5.46 ‖
> *kā(rya)karaṇakartavyarūpādiparivarjitam*[20] |
> *etad yogavaraṃ śubhraṃ niścintyaṃ tava bhāṣitam* ‖ NK 5.47 ‖

> This excellent radiant yoga, [in which] there is no mind, nothing to be thought about, and no thinker either, devoid of visualization and free of all states, deeds, supports, causes, things to be done, actions, tasks, forms, etc., has been taught to you, O Pārvatī!

Just as the CMSS discussed in the beginning of this section, the NK promises an adept both enjoyment (*bhukti*) and liberation (*mukti*) (e.g. NK 5.18 and 21). Unlike the CMSS and the later VM (discussed in the next section), however, the NK makes it clear that these benefits are obtained by means of initiation.

> *evaṃ yo dīkṣito devi sarvakāmaphalaṃ labhet* |
> *ekoccāreṇa vā devi janmasthānāc chivāvadhim* ‖ NK 5.16 ‖
> *ālokya manasādhvānaṃ nityātantravitānitam* |
> *pūrṇāhutipradānaṃ tu dīkṣā nirvāṇadā bhavet* ‖ NK 5.17 ‖
> *bhuktidā muktidā caiva sadāśivaṃ paraṃ vrajet* ‖ NK 5.18 ab ‖

> He who is initiated in this way, will obtain the fruit of all desires, O Goddess, with a single articulation, seeing with his mind the path from the birthplace up to Śiva. As expounded upon in the *Nityātantra*, with the offering of the final oblation (*pūrṇāhuti*) the initiation (*dīkṣā*) grants liberation (*nirvāṇa*-). [It]

bestows enjoyment and release (*muktidā*), and [the initiate] will obtain the supreme state of *Sadāśiva*.

Thus, to obtain liberation (presumably at the time of death, since the text does not articulate a possibility of liberation during one's lifetime) *and* to be granted fulfilment of all desires, an individual must simply undergo the process of initiation. This involves visualising the path to the supreme state and offering a final oblation to complete the process.

Like the CMSS, the NK is not concerned with soteriological doctrine. While the NK does provide a description of what meditation on the formless Goddess achieves, as well as the fact that liberation is obtained by means of initiation, these passages occupy less than five verses (NK 5.45 cd–47 and 5.16–18 ab). As we will see, a limited interest in soteriology, combined with an emphasis on attainment of special powers, skills, and enjoyments in the Nityā cult is in stark contrast with the YH. Furthermore, unlike the YH, neither the texts of the Nityā cult nor the VM (as we will see in the next section) designate liberation during one's lifetime as a goal. The VM does, however, devote significant attention to *mokṣa* (liberation) within its system of three *tattva*s (elements or principles of reality), as one of the three stages of emanation of the Goddess. This sets up an important link between liberation and ritual, which is further developed in the later tradition.

Mokṣa in the triadic scheme of the VM

In the VM, the earliest extant text of the cult of Tripurasundarī, the triad is a leitmotif, similar to, but much more elaborate than in the antecedent Nityā cult. The most significant triad consists of three stages of emanation associated with three *tattva*s identified in this text, that is, liberation (*mokṣa*), desire (*kāma*), and [freedom from] poison(s) (*viṣa*).[21] These three stages and corresponding *tattva*s are understood within the context of the threefold nature of the Goddess, the Śrīcakra,[22] the principal fifteen-syllabled *vidyā*,[23] supplementary *vidyā*s, and the processual creation of the universe. Furthermore, practices in the VM [24] are grouped according to the stages of emanation. As we will see in the discussion below, as an essential part of the ritual, organisational, and conceptual structure of the VM, the *tattva* of liberation (*mokṣa*) forms a crucial aspect of the theology in the cult of Tripurasundarī. However, its conceptualisation in the VM is unusual. And while in the VM the *tattva* of liberation is a vital part of a larger structure, in the YH the purpose of the entire system of worship of the 'threefold' Goddess, including the Śrīcakra and the principal *mantra*, is the attainment of liberation while still living.

In the VM, the three stages of emanation (*vāgbhava*, *kāmarāja*, and *śakti*) are outlined in the first chapter (*paṭala*). The section discusses a system of eight *vidyāṅga*s (supplementary *vidyā*s), beginning with *karaśuddhikarī* for purifying one's hands prior to ritual,[25] continuing with the performance of *nyāsa* (installing

the deity in the body through *mantra*s and touch), and culminating in the extraction of the principal fifteen-syllabled *vidyā*.[26] While *vāgbhava*, *kāmarāja*, and *śakti* are mentioned in earlier texts describing the antecedent cult,[27] their use within a complex system of triadic equivalences in the VM is unique to the cult of Tripurasundarī.

In the beginning of the fourth *paṭala*, the redactors discuss metaphysics and cosmology, prior to delving into a discussion of rituals for specific purposes. First, Tripurasundarī is described as a primal, transcendent Goddess, whose subtle form is the causal latent state of all creation.

> *tripurā paramā śaktir ādyā jātāditaḥ priye* |
> *sthūlasūkṣmavibhāgena trailokyotpattimātṛkā* | VM 4.4 |

> The supreme *śakti* is Tripurā, O dear one, originally born [from] the primal one.
> With both gross and subtle forms, she is the Mother who is the origin of the
> three worlds.

While all of creation originates from Tripurasundarī as the supreme *śakti*, the three stages of creation, sustaining, and dissolution here are presided over by Vāmā, Jyeṣṭhā, and Raudrī,[28] a triad of *śakti*s known from the earliest strata of the Mantramārga texts,[29] which we will see preserved and elaborated on in the YH. These goddesses are not part of the vast retinue of Tripurasundarī installed and worshipped in the Śrīcakra (VM 1.136–162). Their use is symbolic rather than ritual, linking Tripurasundarī with triads well-known from earlier Śaiva *tantra*s, including what is likely the oldest extant Śaiva *tantra*, the *Niśvāsatattvasaṃhitā*.[30] In addition to the link with Vāmā, Jyeṣṭhā, and Raudrī, Tripurasundarī is identified with a later grouping of Śiva's powers (*śakti*s) of knowledge, action, and volition (*jñāna*, *kriyā*, and *icchā*).[31] She is further correlated with the male triad of Brahmā, Viṣṇu, and Rudra, associated with creation, sustaining, and dissolution in Brahmanical literature.[32] These names also refer to the three 'knots' (*granthi*s) named after these deities, which are understood to separate groups of *cakra*s (wheels) in yogic physiology.[33] Tripurā is also explicitly described here as the 'threefold Goddess' (*trividhā devī*) and the creatrix of the three worlds, which provides us with what is likely the earliest extant etymology of her name.[34]

> *tripurā trividhā devī brahmaviṣṇvīśarūpiṇī* |
> *jñānaśaktiḥ kriyāśaktir icchāśaktyātmikā priye* | VM 4.11 |
> *trailokyaṃ saṃsṛjaty asmāt tripurā parikīrtitā* | VM 4.12 ab |[35]

> She is the threefold Tripurā, the Goddess in the form of Brahmā, Viṣṇu, and
> Rudra; her nature consists of the energies of knowledge, activity, and desire, O
> beloved! She emits the three worlds; and because of this she is celebrated as
> Tripura.

The system of triadic equivalences is completed by the three forms of Tripurasundarī herself, that is, Vāgīśvarī, Kāmakalā, and Parā Śakti,[36] and the three *tattva*s of liberation (*mokṣa*), desire (*kāma*), and [freedom from] poison(s) (*viṣa*).

> . . . *seyam avyaktā tripurā vyaktim āgatā* |
> *tattvatrayavinirdiṣṭā varṇaśaktitrayātmikā* | VM 4.16 |[37]
> *vāgīśvarī jñānaśaktir vāgbhavā mokṣarūpiṇī* |
> *kāmarājā kāmakalā kāmarūpā kriyātmikā* | VM 4.17 |
> *śaktibījā parā śaktir icchaiva viṣarūpiṇī* |
> *evaṃ devī tryakṣarā tu mahātripurasundarī* | VM 4.18 |[38]
> . . .*sarvam eva tvayā proktaṃ tripurājñānam uttamam* |
> *kāmatattvaṃ viṣajñānaṃ mokṣatattvaṃ trayaṃ tathā* | VM 5.1 |[39]

Tripurā is unmanifest; but having manifested, she embodies the three syllables,[40] three *śakti*s, and is indicated by the three *tattva*s. [She is] Vāgīśvarī (the goddess of speech), the *jñāna śakti*, and *vāgbhava*; her form is liberation. [She is] *kāmarājā*, Kāmakalā, whose form is desire, [and] whose nature is *kriya* (activity); she is the supreme *śakti*, the *śakti* syllable, and the *icchā śakti*; her form is *viṣa*.[41] Thus the great Tripurasundarī is the Goddess of three syllables. . .. You have told me everything about the supreme knowledge of Tripurā and the triad of *kāmatattva*, the knowledge of *viṣa*, and *mokṣatattva*.

I have summarised the three stages of emanation with corresponding *śakti*s, *tattva*s, and aspects of the Goddess, referred to in the verses discussed above in Table 1 below. I also included additional information on syllables and sections of the principal *vidyā* from the section on *vidyā*s (VM 1.79 cd–101), which are understood to correspond to the three stages of emanation. As we will see, this complex threefold structure of emanation of the Goddess, which applies to ritual, *mantra*, *cakra*, the macrocosm, and the microcosm, forms an essential part within the highly structured ritual knowledge system and had a significant impact on the development of the cult of Tripurasundarī, with implications for its soteriology and the doctrine of liberation.

Of greatest interest to us here is the first stage of emanation, *vāgbhava*, which is associated with the *tattva* of liberation (*mokṣa*). In the *vāgbhava* stage, the Goddess is worshipped as white, pure, and blemishless.[42] The ritualist propitiating this form of the Goddess must wear white, observe celibacy, and make white offerings.

> *dhavalāmbarasaṃvīto dhavalāmbaramadhyagaḥ* | VM 4.21 |
> *pūjayed dhavalaiḥ puṣpair brahmacaryarato naraḥ* |
> *dhavalair eva naivedyair dadhikṣīraudanādibhiḥ* | VM 4.22 |
> *saṃkalpadhavalair vāpi yathākāmaṃ yathā labhet* |
> *saṃpūjya parameśāni dhyāyed vāgīśvarīṃ parām* | VM 4.23 |

Table 1. Three stages of emanation

Stage of emanation	Seed syllable	Portion of the principal *vidyā*	Śakti	*Tattva*	Aspect
vāgbhava	aiṃ	ka e ī la hrīṃ	jñāna	mokṣa	Vāgīśvarī
kāmarāja	klīṃ	ha ka ha la hrīṃ	kriyā	kāma	Kāmakalā/Kāmeśvarī
śakti	sauḥ	ha sa ka la hrīṃ	icchā	viṣa	Parā Śakti

> *bījarūpām ullasantīṃ cidānandaprabodhinīm |*
> *brahmagranthiṃ vinirbhidya jihvāgre dīparūpiṇīm | VM 4.24 ‖*[43]

Clothed in white garments in the midst of white cloth, intent on celibacy, one should worship her with white flowers, white food offerings, such as curd, milk, and boiled rice, etc., or with offerings visualised as white, according to [his[44]] desire, or as he can obtain. O Supreme Goddess, having performed the worship, he should visualise Vāgīśvarī, who is transcendent, blazing up in the form of the [vāgbhava] bīja[45] awakening the bliss of consciousness, [and] having pierced the Brahma knot,[46] shining like a lamp on the tip of [his] tongue.

The last verse in the above quotation refers to Vāgīśvarī as the transcendent Goddess and describes her in terms that merge what had been regarded as the second, intermediate, *kuṇḍalinī* form and a third, transcendent form of the principal Goddess in the NK. Linking the highest, most subtle form of the Goddess with yogic awareness is significant for the later development of this tradition, as we will see in discussion of the YH.

The goals of these practices are wisdom and eloquence, rather than liberation, despite the fact that they are linked with the *tattva* of liberation. For example, just after the citation above, which describes the Goddess as the supreme transcendent Vāgīśvarī and as *kuṇḍalinī*, breaking through the obstructions to awaken the bliss of consciousness (VM 4.24), verses 4.25 through 4.33 offer a protracted list of benefits accrued from the worship of the Goddess in this form. All of these concern worldly knowledge and skills, which would help one attain success and power, but do not lead to liberation. Paraphrasing the VM, even the most ignorant individual who contemplates the Goddess as Vāgīśvarī can acquire mastery of the six schools of orthodox Hindu philosophy (*ṣaṭṭarka*), words and sentences, poetics, classical poetry, scriptures and various sciences, magical procedures, painting and crafts, eloquent speech, sophisticated grammar, all languages (including those of birds), scripts, weaponry, and, finally, omniscience. In other words, mastery over every imaginable type of knowledge is listed, with the exception of liberation.[47] Thus, although the *tattva* of the *vāgbhava* stage is called *mokṣa*, and the transcendent nature of the Goddess is emphasised in the VM, the text does not include systematic practices for attaining liberation, reflecting the types of adepts who must have

worshiped Tripurasundarī at that time, that is, courtiers in search of special powers (*siddhi*s), courtly graces, and eloquence. Therefore, like the *tantra*s of the antecedent Nityā cult, the VM does not emphasise a soteriological or *mokṣa*-oriented agenda, but aims towards acquiring skill and power in the world. Yet it is precisely the immense complexity of ritual and mantric structure, including the system of ninety-seven subordinate goddesses installed within in the Śrīcakra,[48] as laid out in the VM, which informs the soteriological doctrine of the later tradition, as we will see in the discussion of the YH.

Non-dual Śaivism and a paradigm shift in the cult of Tripurasundarī

The creative efflorescence of non-dual Śaiva exegesis, which began towards the end of the first millennium CE and continued into the first centuries of the second millennium, is indebted, in large part, to the work of the Kashmirian Abhinavagupta and his student, Kṣemarāja.[49] Both adepts wrote on Pratyabhijñā philosophy, continuing the legacy of Somānanda (c. 900–50) and Utpaladeva (fl. c. 925–75).[50] Abhinavagupta commented on Utpaladeva's *Īśvarapratyabhijñākārikā* and its auto-commentary, while Kṣemarāja summarised the doctrine of this philosophical corpus in forty-one succinct and memorable verses of the *Pratyabhijñāhṛdaya* (PH). Although Abhinavagupta's writing was the work of prodigious erudition and exegetical brilliance, it was perhaps the quieter genius of his student Kṣemarāja that secured the dominance of philosophical non-dualism in Śaiva tantric traditions by articulating such views with clarity, concision, and elegance.

Among Abhinavagupta's exegetical works, of particular relevance to the later development of the cult of Tripurasundarī is the *Tantrāloka*. In this monumental text, Abhinavagupta developed a style that reverberated throughout Śaiva literature. Among Kṣemarāja's extant exegetical work, his commentaries on the *Netra* and the *Svacchanda tantra*s are of particular importance for understanding the reinterpretation of the cult of Tripurasundarī in light of Śaiva non-dualism. Indeed, the ideas of these two towering figures of the Kashmirian commentarial tradition significantly reshaped the landscape of Śākta Śaiva exegesis, influencing, for centuries to come, not only commentaries on the *tantra*s of the cult of Tripurasundarī produced in Kashmir, but also in South India and throughout the subcontinent. In Abhinavagupta's exegesis of the Trika's *Mālinīvijayottara* and Kṣemarāja's 'extension'[51] of this exegesis to the *Svacchanda* and the *Netra tantra*s, both authors succeed in creating a new interpretive language, which infused *tantra*s with non-dualist Śaiva interpretations based on the Krama-influenced Trika and Pratyabhijñā. Jayaratha's commentary on the VM mentioned earlier was a similar undertaking; that is, a creative non-dualist reinterpretation of an older ritual text that was neither dualistic nor non-dualistic in and of itself, as I argue elsewhere.[52]

However, before Jayaratha, the redactors of the YH had thoroughly assimilated the new idiom of Śaiva non-dualism to produce a scriptural text that differs

significantly from the VM and the earlier *tantra*s of the Nityā cult. Transformations within the cult of Tripurasundarī recorded in the YH built upon existing ritual structures while shifting emphasis to internal meditative practices, imbuing them with a focus on awareness, and re-evaluating and updating them in line with Pratyabhijñā. Most notable among doctrinal innovations was the reorientation of the goals of practice towards *jīvanmukti*. In the remainder of the article, I will highlight these transformations in the YH by placing them in context with earlier texts, detailing specific changes that privileged the attainment of liberation while still living.

Innovation and elaboration in the YH

We have seen some descriptions of internalised practices for mundane benefits and attainment of special powers, as well as conceptualisations of the subtle transcendent form of the Goddess in the Nityā cult and the VM. In the YH, the external ritual is greatly enhanced and supplemented with visualisations and phonic meditations (e.g. meditation on the principal *vidyā* and the *bīja mantra hrīṃ*), which are understood to result both in the attainment of *siddhi*s (supernatural powers) and *jīvanmukti*, a new concept for the cult of Tripurasundarī. While the nature and goal of practices in the YH have undergone transformation, the YH continues to draw on structures established in the VM. Among them are the Śrīcakra, the principal *mantra*, and the network of triadic equivalences articulated in the earlier *tantra*.[53] As in the VM, the principal *mantra* and the Śrīcakra are viewed in the YH not only as a ritual utterance and diagram, but as verbal and physical analogues of cosmic emanation, reflected in the microcosm of the body. However, while the earlier VM focuses on providing instructions for the performance of external ritual, the YH details extensive mental practices carried out through visualisations and aural meditations in its expositions on *cakra* (*cakrasaṃketa*,[54] which comprises the first chapter) and *mantra* (*mantrasaṃketa*, that is, the second chapter).[55] And when it does turn to external ritual in its exposition on worship [of the Goddess within the Śrīcakra] (*pūjāsaṃketa*, that is, the third chapter), ritual performance is enhanced by a mental identification of the adept with the Goddess and a performance of *nyāsa*. While the former and the latter *are* found in the VM, both are greatly enhanced and elaborated upon in the YH. For example, the description of four types of *nyāsa* occupies an unprecedented 80.5 verses in the *pūjāsaṃketa* (3.8 ce–89). Furthermore, Śrīcakra ritual described in the *pūjāsaṃketa* is supplemented by meditation on the sound (*nāda*) and rising of *kuṇḍalini* within the adept's subtle body. This is in addition to a vast number of yogic practices and phonic meditations in the first two *saṃketa*s, mentioned earlier.

What did a re-evaluation of the existing system in light of Pratyabhijñā entail? The term Pratyabhijñā refers to a 'recognition' of the identity of the individual cogniser with the supreme self and a realisation that the universe is a manifestation of that divine consciousness.[56] Let us compare Kṣemarāja's description of

cosmic manifestation with its articulation in the YH. The similarity of expression suggests that the YH redactors were not only familiar with Pratyabhijñā ideas,[57] but knew the text of the PH.

> *citiḥ svatantrā viśvasiddhihetuḥ* ‖ PH 1 ‖
> *svecchayā svabhittau viśvam unmīlayati* ‖ PH 2 ‖[58]

Consciousness is autonomous, being the cause of the functioning of the universe. According to her own free will, on herself as the screen, she manifests the universe.

> *cidātmabhittau viśvasya prakāśāmarśane yadā* |
> *karoti svecchayā pūrṇavicikīrṣāsamanvitā* ‖ YH 1.56 ‖[59]

When [the supreme radiance] is endowed with desire to completely transform by her own will, she creates manifestation and contemplation of the universe on the screen of the self, which is consciousness.

The use of Pratyabhijñā terminology is common in the YH, something not found either in the Nityā cult or in the VM. For example, early on in the *cakrasaṃketa*, the YH describes the descent (*avatāra*) of the Śrīcakra from the undifferentiated consciousness of the *bindu* (the central point within the Śrīcakra) outward through all nine sub-*cakra*s, in which ninety-six subordinate goddesses are located. In the description of the first stage of this process of manifestation (from the *bindu* to the first triangle of the Śrīcakra), the text refers to the three Matṛkas, known from the VM and to a new conceptual triad: cogniser (*pramātṛ* or *mātṛ*, as in the verse below), object of cognition (*prameya* or *meya*), and cognition (*pramā*) itself.

> *etaccakrāvatāraṃ tu kathayāmi tavānaghe* |
> *yadā sā paramā śaktiḥ svecchayā viśvarūpiṇī* ‖ YH 1.9 ‖
> *sphurattām ātmanaḥ paśyet tadā cakrasya sambhavaḥ* |
> *śūnyākārād visargāntād bindoḥ praspandasaṃvidaḥ* ‖ YH 1.10 ‖
> *prakāśaparamārthatvāt sphurattālaharīyutāt* |
> *prasṛtaṃ viśvalaharīsthānaṃ mātṛtrayātmakam* ‖ YH 1.11 ‖
> *baindavaṃ cakram etasya trirūpatvaṃ punar bhavet* |
> *dharmādharmau tathātmāno mātṛmeyau tathā pramā* ‖ YH 1.12 ‖[60]

And I [will] tell you, O faultless one, of the descent of this *cakra*. When the highest *śakti* in the form of the universe (*viśvarūpiṇī*), by her own free will, perceives the vibration of [her] self, then the *cakra* comes into being. From the *bindu*, which is consciousness as vibration, the void of 'a' to *visarga*, [endowed with] a glittering wave, the real object of manifesting cognition, issued forth the Baindava *cakra* [i.e. the first triangle to emerge from the *bindu*], which is the

> three mothers (Vāmā, Jyeṣṭhā, Raudrī), the abode of the waves of the universe.
> And this [*cakra*] is threefold, having the nature of *dharma*, *adharma*, and the self,
> and also of the cogniser, object of cognition, and cognition.

The threefold concept of cogniser, object of cognition, and cognition, while of utmost importance for Pratyabhijñā, was unknown to the redactors of the VM. It was not until the composition of the YH that this group was added to the elaborated system of triadic equivalences. We will return to the elaboration on the three mothers, Vāmā, Jyeṣṭhā, Raudrī, as well as other triadic equivalences below.

The description of the cosmic emanation of the Śrīcakra in the sequence of creation (from *bindu* to the outer enclosure), excerpted above, is followed by instructions for a complex meditative procedure in which an adept mentally transposes parts of the Śrīcakra onto his yogic body (in the order of dissolution, from the outer enclosure to the *bindu*). Here the YH evidences not only the sophisticated metaphysics of Pratyabhijñā, but also an elaborate conception of the yogic body. Some notions related to the yogic body, such as winds (*vāyus*) and the vital principle (*prāṇa*) go back to the Vedic Saṃhitās; the conceptions of subtle channels (*nāḍīs*) can be traced to the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* and the *Niśvāsatattvasaṃhitā*; and an influential system of six power centres (*cakras*, lit. wheels) is first found in the *Kubjikāmata*.[61] In the YH, the yogic body is made up of a network of nine cakras (corresponding to the subsections in the Śrīcakra), nine lotuses (*padmas*),[62] twelve *granthi*s (knots), and kuṇḍalinī. The YH harnesses the yogic body as part of the work's soteriologically oriented meditation techniques called *bhāvanā*s. In the first chapter, the YH prescribes visualising the Śrīcakra within one's body by 'installing' its nine sub-*cakra*s of this ritual diagram in the nine *padma*s (i.e. mentally superimposing sections of the ritual diagram onto the yogic body, as it was understood in this system). The direction of this visualisation is upwards, from gross to progressively subtler energy centres, and ending with visualising the *bindu* (i.e. the central point within the Śrīcakra), understood as undifferentiated consciousness.

While understanding of the system of the yogic body is meant to guide the adept experientially to the realisation of supreme consciousness, a synthesising awareness of the non-duality of the deity, *guru*, the Śrīcakra, *mantra*, and the self is necessary to attain its permanent awareness.

> *nigarbho 'pi mahādevi śivagurvātmagocaraḥ* ǁ YH 2.48 cd ǁ
> *tatprakāraṃ ca deveśi diṅmātreṇa vadāmi te* ǀ
> *śivagurvātmanām aikyānusandhānāt tadātmakam* ǁ YH 2.49 ǁ
> *niṣkalatvaṃ śive buddhvā tadrūpatvaṃ guror api* ǀ
> *tannirīkṣaṇasāmarthyād ātmanaś ca śivātmatām* ǁ YH 2.50 ǁ
> *bhāvayed bhaktinamraḥ san śaṅkonmeṣākalaṅkitaḥ* ǀ
> *kaulikaṃ kathayiṣyāmi cakradevatayor api* ǁ YH 2.51 ǀ
> *vidyāgurvātmanām aikyaṃ . . .* ǀ YH 2.52 a ǀ[63]

And the inner meaning, O great Goddess, concerns Śiva, *guru*, and the self. O Ruler of the Gods, I am merely indicating these types because of the synthesizing awareness of the unity of Śiva, *guru*, and the self. Having comprehended the undividedness of Śiva and the fact that the *guru* has the same form, having the capacity to see that, one should meditate on the self that has the nature of Śiva, bowed down in devotion and unblemished by the appearance of doubt. And I will tell you the Kaulika [meaning] of the *cakra* and the deity and the oneness of the *vidyā*, *guru*, and the self...

This passage from the *mantrasaṃketa* clearly expresses a belief in the identity of the self (*ātman*) with the supreme divinity. Updating the cult of Tripurasundarī with esoteric concepts drawn from Pratyabhijñā, the YH articulates an overtly non-dual philosophy—a new development for the cult of Tripurasundarī. Non-dualism articulated in the YH, however, has its own unique flavour, equating the deity, the Śrīcakra, the principal *vidyā*, the *guru*, and the self, extending non-dualism to embrace the ritual diagram, *mantra*, and *guru*, by whose grace the adept receives initiation.

Here a realisation of non-duality is not compared to a flash of insight, but imbricated with a ritual system of this tradition. *Jīvanmukti* is either mentioned or referred to in the beginning or at the end of each of the three chapters (*saṃketas*) in the YH, clearly connecting each part of the practice (*cakra*, *mantra*, and *pūjā*) with the attainment of supreme knowledge and emphasising the inseparable character of liberating knowledge and practice. In the YH, the most important aspect of knowledge is a cultivation of non-dual awareness through meticulous performance of ritual and meditative practices. And even when exposition concerns external ritual, as in the *pūjāsaṃketa*, the only chapter to discuss external ritual in this text to any extent, the cultivation of non-dual awareness is paramount, as demonstrated in the passage below.

> *tava nityoditā pūjā tribhir bhedair vyavasthitā |*
> *parā cāpy aparā gauri tṛtīyā ca parāparā ‖ YH 3.2 ‖*
> *prathamādvaitabhāvasthā sarvaprasaragocarā |*
> *dvitīyā cakrapūjā ca sadā niṣpādyate mayā ‖ YH 3.3 ‖*
> *evaṃ jñānamaye devi tṛtīyā svaprathāmayī |*
> *uttamā sā parā jñeyā vidhānaṃ śṛṇu sāmpratam ‖ YH 3.4 ‖*
> *mahāpadmavanāntasthe[64] vāgbhave gurupādukām |*
> *āpyāyitajagadrūpāṃ paramāmṛtavarṣiṇīm ‖ YH 3.5 ‖*
> *sañcintya paramādvaitabhāvanāmṛtaghūrṇitaḥ |*
> *daharāntarasaṃsarpannādālokanatatparaḥ ‖ YH 3.6 ‖*
> *vikalparūpasaṃjalpavimukho 'ntarmukhaḥ sadā |*
> *citkalollāsadalitasaṃkocas tv atisundaraḥ ‖ YH 3.7 ‖*

> Your *pūjā*, eternally performed, is established with three divisions: transcend-
> ent and immanent, and the third is mixed. The domain of the first is all activity
> in the state of non-duality. The second one is the *cakrapūjā*, which is constantly
> performed by me [Bhairava]. And the third one, O Goddess, which is mixed, and
> consists of spontaneous arising of knowledge is when [the adept] is filled with
> wisdom. Transcendent is known as the highest. Listen now to its method.
> Having visualised in the *vāgbhava*, which is the forest of the great lotus,
> guru's feet, which have the form of the entire world spreading out and pouring
> forth supreme nectar, [the adept] delights in the ambrosia of the resulting
> supreme state of non-duality. Absorbed in the contemplation of *nāda* (pure
> sound), proceeding from within the heart, turning away from the chatter of
> thoughts in the form of *vikalpa*, always directed inward, exceedingly beautiful,
> his contraction burst by the shining forth of the power of consciousness.

On the one hand, this exposition on *pūjā* includes many familiar elements. Note
the similarities of the threefold worship in this passage to a visualisation of the
Goddess 'with thought,' 'with and without thought,' and 'beyond thought' in the
NK discussed earlier. Furthermore, in this passage the YH builds on the threefold
system of emanation, beginning with *vāgbhava*, discussed in the VM. However,
unlike the CMSS and the VM, in the YH, the description of the existing triadic
structure is enhanced by means of Pratyabhijñā and infused with soteriological
value. Meditation on the *vāgbhava* stage, previously associated with *mokṣa* only by
name, is now understood as a practice resulting in the cessation of thought and a
realisation of the supreme non-duality (i.e. *jīvanmukti*). Furthermore, non-duality
in this passage is likened to the supreme nectar emanating from guru's feet, one of
several devotional references to the guru and the lineage in this text.[65]

As we have seen, the YH is similar to VM in using various triads, while also
expanding the range of triadic equivalences. While the threefold structure of the
cakra, the threefold worship of the Goddess, and the three goddesses of creation,
sustaining, and dissolution, Vāmā, Jyeṣṭhā, Raudrī, are familiar from the VM, the
YH incorporates new conceptual triads to reflect revisions in its doctrinal orien-
tation. Among the latter are such new triads for this tradition as Śiva, *guru*, and the
self, the Goddess, *cakra* and *vidyā*, and cogniser, object of cognition, and cognition,
mentioned earlier. In addition to using such various sets of three, the YH occa-
sionally refers to the schema of three plus a transcendent fourth. In this respect,
the redactors of the text set up a pattern similar to that of the later Trika texts,
such as the *Devyāyāmala*, where Kālasaṃkarṣaṇī (Kālī), under the influence of
Krama, was incorporated as the fourth, transcendent Goddess, above the Trika's
original three (Parā, Parāparā, and Aparā).[66] To the existing structure of a triad of
goddesses, emerging in the process of cosmic emanation, the YH adds a fourth—
the supreme Ambikā. Furthermore, these four, Vāmā, Jyeṣṭhā, Raudrī, and Ambikā,
are equated here with the four levels of speech—that is, *paśyantī*, *madhyamā*,
vaikharī, and *parā vāc*,[67] which are concepts drawn from Pratyabhijñā.

deśakālān avacchinnaṃ tadūrdhve paramaṃ mahat |
nisargasundaraṃ tat tu parānandavighūrṇitam ‖ YH 1.35 ‖
ātmanaḥ sphuraṇaṃ paśyed yadā sā paramā kalā |
ambikārūpam āpannā parā vāk samudīritā ‖ YH 1.36 ‖
bījabhāvasthitaṃ viśvaṃ sphuṭīkartuṃ yadonmukhī |
vāmā viśvasya vamanād aṅkurākāratāṃ[68] *gatā ‖ YH 1.37 ‖*
icchāśaktis tadā seyaṃ paśyantīvapuṣā sthitā |
jñānaśaktis tathā jyeṣṭā madhyamā vāg udīritā ‖ YH 1.38 ‖
ṛjurekhāmayī viśvasthitau prathitavigrahā |
tatsaṃhṛtidaśāyāṃ tu baindavaṃ rūpam āsthitā ‖ YH 1.39 ‖
pratyāvṛttikrameṇaivaṃ śṛṅgaṭavapur ujjvalā |
kriyāśaktis tu raudrīyaṃ vaikharī viśvavigrahā ‖ YH 1.40 ‖

Above that is the supreme *mahābindu*, which transcends space and time and is naturally beautiful, whirling with supreme bliss. When this supreme *kalā*[69] sees the effulgence of the self, she assumes the form of Ambikā, known as *Parāvāc* (the supreme word). When she looks up to manifest the universe, abiding in the state of a seed, she is Vāmā because she emits the universe, having taken on the form of the sprout. Then she is *icchā śakti* abiding in the form of Paśyantī. As Jyeṣṭā, she is *jñāna śakti*, known as *madhyamā* speech. Her form is extended in a straight line when she sustains the universe. But as Raudrī, at the stage of dissolution, she reverts to a *bindu*. And, on return, she is luminous in the form of a triangle, *kriya śakti*, and *vaikharī* speech, in the form of the universe.

The passage above refers to the first step of meditation, which follows the installation of the Śrīcakra in the subtle body of the adept. An adept visualises the *mahābindu* above the *sahasrāra* (the crown cakra) as the origin of the manifestation of the universe, a cosmic process developing along the pattern of the *Śrīcakra*, and traces it within the microcosm of the yogic body.[70] The image of the sprout (*aṅkura*) of undifferentiated consciousness is familiar to us from the CMSS of the Nityā cult (e.g. CMSS 132, 102, 111, 147; see also Chapter 2) and from the VM (4.9–10). Familiar also is the triad of goddesses, mentioned earlier. Triads associated with the three stages of manifestation in the VM, however, are elaborated upon wherever possible (i.e. by adding Ambikā and drawing analogies with the four levels of speech in Pratyabhijñā) and kept unchanged where a term for a fourth, transcendent stage does not exist and is not needed (i.e. there is no *śakti* parallel to Ambikā).

Conclusion

The YH revitalised the cult of the Goddess Tripurasundarī in a way that appealed to its new, sophisticated, and philosophically-inclined audience. From a collection of rituals aimed at manipulating the world on a mundane level, the cult adapted to

encompass a well-developed array of soteriological practices. The redactors of the YH introduced yogic practices, visualisations, and aural meditations, etc., based on the existing structure of the Śrīcakra, which could now be mentally superimposed onto the yogic body of the practitioner. In addition, the YH reinterpreted the existing metaphysics of the cult of Tripurasundarī through the sophisticated conceptions of cognition developed in Pratyabhijñā. A new array of practices and vastly enhanced metaphysics did not replace but rather enriched the existing ritual system. As a result, the complex ritual configuration of the Śrīcakra could be utilised not only for external ritual but also within the yogic body by means of a meditative, visualisation process.

The YH was unique, however, for offering its adherents the chance to attain liberation during their lifetime through the process of *jīvanmukti*, thus intimately binding liberation with ritual. This focus on ritual had its origins in the VM, which in combination with the YH provided the rich, complex foundations of the cult of Tripurasundarī and the goals of acquiring worldly skills and special powers, while setting soteriological precedent for the later tradition. By shifting the focus from external ritual (i.e. worship of the Goddess within the Śrīcakra), without undermining its foundational importance, to inwardly-focused meditative practices, which were performed mentally on the substratum of the yogic body, the practitioners of the cult of Tripurasundarī reoriented their goals towards *jīvanmukti*.

The YH thereby marked a turning point in the development of the Tripurasundarī tradition. Commentators on the VM and the YH in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries continued to elevate this ritual tradition, establishing additional linkages and connections with the Kashmirian non-dual exegetical tradition and, in South India, the Vedic and Upaniṣadic corpus and, eventually, Advaita Vedānta. From obscure cult, the tradition of Tripurasundarī developed into a preeminent Hindu tantric tradition. Doctrinally and ritually sophisticated, it was poised to play a significant role in institutional and devotional practice of global Hinduism.

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Notes

1 The term 'Śrīvidyā' is not found in the earliest sources of this tradition, which are the focus of this article. Its earliest usage appears to be in the *Saubhāgyasudhodaya* by Amṛtānanda, the author of the fourteenth-century commentary on the *Yoginīhṛdaya*, in which he cites the earlier text. Usually taken as a Sanskrit compound of appositional type (*karmadhāraya*), the name 'Śrīvidyā' consists of two parts. The first is *śrī*, an honorific or polite way to address a deity or respected elder, with the additional meaning of *saubhāgya*, i.e. 'good fortune, success, happiness, beauty, charm' (Padoux and Amṛtānandanātha 1994, p.5). Among the primary meanings of the word *vidyā*, 'knowledge' and 'wisdom' are usually mentioned. Douglas Renfrew Brooks 1992 famously translated the name of this tradition as *Auspicious Wisdom*, a moniker that served as the title of his important work on Śrīvidyā. In addition, Goudriaan (1981) and others have taken Śrī in the title to refer to Lakṣmī. However, I have not found similarities in the early ritual or iconography of Tripurasundarī to Lakṣmī, while connections with the Trika and

the cult of Kubjikā are common, as I argue elsewhere (forthcoming). It is well known that Śrīvidyā refers both to the name of the tradition and its principal *mantra.* For this reason and because the earliest usage of the term in the *Saubhāgyasudhodaya* and *Yoginīhṛdayadipikā* are found in the context of the principal *mantra*, I argue that the primary meaning of *vidyā* in this context is that of a tantric (or non-Vedic) *mantra* used to invoke feminine deities. Thus, it would be less eloquent, but more accurate to translate Śrīvidyā as an exocentric compound (*bahuvrihi*), [the Tradition of the] Auspicious Mantra, rather than a *karmadhāraya* compound, Auspicious Wisdom, or a syntactic compound (*tatpuruṣa*), the Wisdom of Śrī, as Brooks suggests (see 1990, p.xiv).

2 The Sanskrit name Tripurasundarī means the 'beauty of the three cities'. The shorter form, Tripurā, can be translated as 'one belonging to the three cities'. I suggest that the earliest etymologies describing this Goddess as threefold (VM 4.11) and the Mother of the three worlds (VM 4.4) are found in the passage of the *Vāmakeśvarīmata* on her threefold emanation, which I discuss below. I suggest that it is this triadic nature of the Goddess, reflected in her name, that gives rise to various other interpretations in later commentaries, for example, those cited in Brooks (1992, pp.76–7). Perhaps, the fact that Tripurasundarī first emerged as an esoteric Tantric Goddess, may explain a lack of early Purāṇic stories about her. It is only later on, when chanting of hymns and popular devotion to this Goddess became widespread, that her Purāṇic stories proliferated, a development I plan to investigate in future research.

3 See Fisher (2017), Lidke (2017), and Dempsey (2006).

4 On the dates of Abhinavagupta and Kṣemarāja, see Sanderson (2007, p.411). For an explanation of dates of the *Vāmakeśvarīmata* and the *Yoginīhṛdaya*, see Golovkova (unpublished thesis, 2010, 2012, and forthcoming).

5 See Finn and Jayaratha's (1986) translation of the *Vāmakeśvarīmata* with Kashmirian commentary from the thirteenth-century CE by Jayaratha. There is also Padoux and Amṛtānandanātha's (1994) French translation of the *Yoginīhṛdaya* tantra with Amṛtānandanātha's fourteenth-century commentary. In addition, a translation of this *tantra*, accompanied with reflections drawn from the commentary, has been published in English by Padoux and Jeanty (2013). Methodologically, my approach differs from Padoux's earlier work. For example, in his translation of the root *tantra*, Padoux relied heavily on the fourteenth-century commentary by Amṛtānandanātha and, as a result, conflated the distinctiveness of the eleventh-century *Yoginīhṛdaya* with Amṛtānanda's later gloss (see Golovkova, forthcoming). My own work treats *tantra*s, and their commentaries, as the products of different historical actors, with their own goals and aspirations. From this approach emerges a study of ritual practices and doctrines, which are preserved in related, but distinct texts, share some features, but not others, and build upon existing cosmology, numerology, and ritual elements, while also adding new philosophical interpretations.

6 YH pp.4 and 6.

7 See, for example, Pollock (2001, 2014).

8 The later provenance of the *Yoginīhṛdaya* has been suggested by Goudriaan (1981, p.59) and Sanderson (2014, pp.65, 67–8) and my reading of the two texts thoroughly supports this account.

9   For a discussion of liberation across a number of Indic traditions, see Fort and Mumme (1996). For studies of *jīvanmukti* within Śaivism, see Serbaeva Saraogi (2010) and Bansat-Boudon (2013).

10 By "worldly" or "this-worldly" I refer to mundane benefits, which may help one to improve their position in the world, but do not lead to liberation.

11 Abhinavagupta (fl. c. 975–1025) knew of the cult of the Nityās and referred to it in the *Tantrāloka* and *Parātrimśikāvivaraṇa.* This evidence places the cult of the Nityās as prior to the early eleventh century at the very latest and likely earlier than that. Jayaratha knew of a *Nityātantra*, which may have been a different version of the NK or an entirely different text, since the passage cited is not found in the single incomplete extant manuscript. For a detailed discussion of the dates of the Nityā cult, see Golovkova (forthcoming).

12 The Nityā cult was associated with the southern transmission (*dakṣiṇāmnāya*) or the southern order (*dakṣiṇagharāmnāya*) among the Kaula systems. This system of classification of the Kaula traditions, given in the *Ciñciṇīmatasārasamuccaya*, included Kālīkula/Krama as the teaching of the northern order (*uttaragharāmnāya*), a system related to the Trika as that of the eastern order (*pūrvagharāmnāya*), and the Kubjikā cult as the tradition of the western order (*paścimagharāmnāya*) (Sanderson 2009, pp.48–9). The classical cult of Tripurasundarī was the latest tantric Kaula tradition to emerge (Sanderson 1988, p.689). Later classifications in the *Parātantra* and *Vāḍavānalīya* elevated the cult of Tripurasundarī as the tradition of the zenith (*ūrdhvāmnāya*) transcending the four Kaula teachings (Sanderson 2004, p.368 and Sanderson, 2012–13, pp.64–7).

13 See Golovkova (forthcoming).

14 Ibid.

15 She is surrounded by her powers in the centre of a triangle, symbolising the *yoni* (vulva). Around the triangle, Kāmadeva (the god of love), who is the Goddess's consort in this tradition, and the subordinate Nityā (lit. eternal) goddesses are arranged in a hexagram around the inner triangle (CMSS 102, 111, and 147).

16 *Gharam* in this context, is short for *gharāmnāya*. Alexis Sanderson suggested that in this context it refers to a 'house' or 'lodge', that is, 'a place for the assembling of members of an initiatory lineage and by extension that lineage itself' (2014, p.59).

17 It is worth noting that unlike the *Vāmakeśvarīmata* and most of the later texts of the cult of Tripurasundarī proper, the CMSS and the NK, discussed in this section, are remarkable in their disregard of conventional Sanskrit grammar. Because Aiśa Sanskrit forms are the norm and not an exception, I did not emend the grammar, which would have stripped these texts of their characteristic language. Neither did I attempt to indicate this peculiarity in the translations, since literary English language lacks a corresponding register.

18 The three types of practices are idiosyncratically designated as 'to be visualised' (*cintya*), mixed (lit. 'to be and not to be visualised', or *cintyācintya*), and 'without visualization' (*niścintya*).

19 *nāpi* conj.] : Sanderson *nyami*
    c(aiva pā)rvati conj.] : Sanderson *c?.. rvati*

20 *kartavya* conj] Sanderson: *karttavyaṃ*

21 The system of *tattva*s in the *Vāmakeśvarīmata* does not bear similarity to the twenty-five Sāṅkhya *tattva*s or thirty-six *tattva*s of the Trika Śaivism.

22 The Śrīcakra, a principal ritual diagram in this tradition, consists of nine sub-*cakra*s formed by nine intersecting triangles, surrounded by two rows of petals and a square enclosure. I have discussed the structure of the Śrīcakra, including ninety-seven subordinate goddesses installed within this structure and the meanings and symbolism of their names in Golovkova (unpublished thesis, 2010). I further discuss continuities between the inner triangle of the Śrīcakra and the ritual system of the Nityā cult in Golovkova (forthcoming). On the Śrīcakra according to the YH, see Padoux (2007, pp.239–50).

23 That is, a tantric (non-Vedic) *mantra* used to invoke a feminine deity.

24 Such practices included *mantra* repetition (*japa*), ritualised worship of the deity (*pūjā*), and worship wherein the deity is invoked in a ritual fire and offered oblations (*homa*).

25 See VM 1.79ce–93ab for the extraction of supplementary *vidyā*s. *Karaśuddhikarī*, which corresponds to the three *bīja* syllables of *vāgbhava*, *kāmarāja*, and *śakti*, is *aiṃ klīṃ sauḥ.*

26 In the later history of the classical tradition, two slight variations of the *mantra* were transmitted in what came to be known as *kādi* and *hādi sampradāya*s, named for the first syllable of the principal *mantra*. The *Vāmakeśvarīmata* precedes this distinction. Its principal *mantra* begins with *ka*, but slightly differs from the *kādi* version preserved by the contemporary tradition, although their total number of syllables is the same. The version extracted in the *Vāmakeśvarīmata* is *ka e ī la hrīṃ ha ka ha la hrīṃ ha sa ka la hrīṃ* (VM 1.94–101).

27 *Vāgbhava* is mentioned in the CMSS (144) as one of the powers of the Goddess, but without reference to *kāmarāja* or *śakti*. However, all three are referred to as syllables of Tripurābhairavī in the *Yogakhaṇḍa* of the *Manthānabhairava*, another source for information on the Nityā cult.

28 *kavalīkṛtaniḥśeṣabījādyāṅkuratāṃ gatā |*
    vāmā śikhā tato jyeṣṭhā śṛṅgāṭākāratāṃ gatā | VM 4.9 |
    raudrī tu parameśāni jagadgrasanarūpiṇī |
    evaṃ sā paramā śaktir ekaiva parameśvarī | VM 4.10 | VM, pp.103–4.

29 For a discussion of the early history of these goddesses as part of a triad and a group of nine *śakti*s, see Hatley (2015, pp.6–7). For the early history of Jyeṣṭhā and the association of Vāmā, Jyeṣṭhā, and Raudrī with phonematic energy and *kuṇḍalinī* (the serpentine energy associated with yogic practices), see White (2003, pp.230–1).

30 The oldest portions of the text may date to the fifth-century CE. See Hatley (2015, pp.1, 6).

31 *Ibid.*

32 This example demonstrates subsuming a popular Brahmanical trio as coequal and, sometimes, subservient to the Goddess(es).

33 See endnote 46 below.

34 See endnote 2.

35 VM, pp.104–5.

36 This is similar to the three forms of the principal Goddess in the NK, discussed earlier, that is, a 'red Goddess', an intermediate form shaped like a coil (*kuṇḍala*),

and a third transcendent Goddess, all three associated with different types of practices. Vāgīśvarī is the Goddess presiding over speech, Kāmakalā is associated with desire, and Parā Śakti is the supreme Goddess.

37 VM, p.107.

38 VM, pp.107–8.

39 VM, p.129.

40 The section on supplementary *mantra*s extracts the three syllables of *vāgbhava*, *kāmarāja*, and *śakti* as *aiṃ klīṃ sauḥ* (VM 182–85a).

41 One of the three *tattva*s in the *Vāmakeśvarīmata*, the term *viṣa*, which normally means 'poison', is used here in the meaning of mastery over poisons. See Golovkova (forthcoming).

42 In the *Jñānārṇavatantra*, this aspect of the Goddess is designated as Bālā Tripurasundarī, a girl goddess, whose worship is still observed in the contemporary tradition. I observed the elaborate worship of the idol of Bālā Tripurasundarī in a large family temple in Nemili, Tamil Nadu in 2017. Bālā is also well known in a diasporic Shri Lankan Tamil lineage in Rush, NY. For an ethnography of the Śrīvidyā temple in Rush, see Dempsey (2006).

43 VM, p.109.

44 The *Vāmakeśvarīmata* was clearly written by male authors for male adepts. The descriptions of practices for attraction in the *Vāmakeśvarīmata* (see Golovkova, forthcoming) leave no room for doubt as to the sex of its target audience. While the YH is entirely cerebral and devoid of sexualised descriptions of women seen through the male gaze, nothing in the text suggests that women were included among its intended audience. I am, therefore, deliberate in my use of male instead of neutral or feminine pronouns.

45 *Vāgbhava*, *kāmarāja*, and *śakti* and the seed syllables (one-syllabic *bīja mantra*s ending in *anusvāra*) correlated to the three stages (i.e. *aiṃ klīṃ sauḥ*), are given in 1.82–85a. I am not translating these terms because their literal meaning would not be helpful for understanding their use in this text.

46 The three 'knots' (*granthi*s) are understood as separate groups of *cakra*s (wheels) in yogic physiology. *Brahmagranthi* (the Brahma knot), which Jayaratha locates between the two lower cakras called *vahni* (fire) and poison (*viṣa*) is the first of three knots (the other two being Viṣṇu and Rudra) that *kuṇḍalinī* (the coiled serpentine energy) must pierce on its way upward through the *cakra*s. Although the system of *ādhāra*s, also referred to as *cakra*s (lit. wheels) or *padma*s (lit. lotuses) has undergone changes in this tradition, the three knots have been preserved in later texts. See, for example, name 100 in the Lalitāsahasranāma (*brahmagranthivibhedinī*, one who pierces the Brahma knot).

47 *cintayen naṣṭahṛdayo grāmyo mūrkho 'tipātakī |*
    śaṭho'pi yaḥ pādam ekaṃ suspaṣṭaṃ vaktum akṣamaḥ | VM 4.25 |
    jaḍo mūko'pi durmedhā gataprajño'pi naṣṭadhīḥ |
    so'pi saṃjāyate vāgmī vācaspatir ivāparaḥ | VM 4.26 |
    satpaṇḍitaghaṭāṭopajetā'pratihataprabhaḥ |
    ṣaṭṭarkapadavākyārthaśabdālaṅkārasāravit | VM 4.27 |
    vātorddhūtasamudrormimālātulyair upanyaset |
    sukumāratarasphārarītyalaṅkārapūrvakaiḥ | VM 4.28 |

padagumphair mahākāvyakartā deveśi jāyate |
vedavedāntasiddhāntavedāṅgajñānapāragaḥ | VM 4.29 |
jyotiḥśāstretihāsādimīmāṃsāsmṛtivākyavit |
purāṇarasavādādigāruḍānekamantravit | VM 4.30 |
pātālaśāstravijñānabhūtatantrārthatattvavit |
vicitracitrakarmādiśilpānekavicakṣaṇaḥ | VM 4.31 |
mahāvyākaraṇodāraśabdasaṃskṛtasarvagīḥ |
sarvabhāṣārutajñānasamastalipikarmavit | VM 4.32 |
nānāśastrārthaśilpādivedavedāṅgaviśrutaḥ |
sarvavāṅmayavettā ca sarvajño devi jāyate | VM 4.33 | (VM: 109–111.)

48 See Golovkova (unpublished thesis, 2010) and Golovkova (forthcoming).

49 For the discussion of the dates of Abhinavagupta and Kṣemarāja, see Sanderson (2007, p.411).

50 On the dates of Somānanda and Utpaladeva, see Sanderson (2007, p.418). For a brief history of Pratyabhijñā, see Torella (2002, pp.i–xxvi).

51 See Sanderson (2007, p.427).

52 See Golovkova (forthcoming).

53 The Śrīcakra was laid out in the *Vāmakeśvarīmata*, but not referred to as such. The *Yoginīhṛdaya* calls it by this name. But the fifteen-syllabled main *mantra* of this tradition was not yet referred to in the *Yoginīhṛdaya* as Śrīvidyā. That designation, whether used to refer to the *mantra* or the overall tradition is a later development (see endnote 1).

54 The *Yoginīhṛdaya* is divided into three sections, or *saṃketas*, on *cakra*, *mantra*, and *pujā*. *Saṃketa* in Sanskrit means 'agreement, engagement, convention, or a short explanation'. Goudriaan (1981) translated it as the 'Esoteric Meaning' and Padoux and Jeanty (2013) as 'Encounter in the. . .' (*cakra*, etc.).

55 André Padoux detailed specific practices in the YH in his translations and a study of the first chapter of the YH, and so I will not discuss them in detail here. See Padoux and Amṛtānandanātha (1994), Padoux (2007), Padoux and Jeanty (2013). Instead, I focus on the diachronic development of soteriology within the tradition, which built on existing ritual, symbolic, and organisational structures.

56 See, for example, Padoux (2005).

57 For further evidence that the *Yoginīhṛdaya* is indebted to the Kashmirian Śākta Śaiva non-dualism, see Padoux and Jeanty (2013, pp.12–14) and Sanderson (2012–13, pp.67–8, f. 257).

58 PH 1911, pp.46 and 51.

59 YH, p.67.

60 YH, p.14–20.

61 See Mallinson and Singleton (2017, pp.xix, 173).

62 Similar to the better-known system of seven *cakra*s.

63 YH, pp.152–5.

64 *mahāpadmavanāntaḥsthe*] em. : Sanderson *mahāpadmavanāntasthe* Ed. (YH, pp.191–9).

65 In the *Vāmakeśvarīmata*, *guru* is not mentioned even once, while the YH contains nine separate instances. In addition to bringing the role of the *guru* to the forefront, the YH for the first time in this tradition also raises an idea of the grace of the

Goddess (1.60) as necessary for attaining liberation. Conceptions of *guru* and grace are well developed in the later tradition.

66 See Sanderson (2007, p.371) for a discussion of goddesses of the late Trika.

67 Pratyabhijñā philosophers assimilated the first three levels of speech, that is, *paśyantī*, *madhyamā*, and *vaikharī* from Bhartṛhari and the philosophy of the Sanskrit grammarians, but added the fourth, transcendent level, that is, *parā vāc*. For the conceptions of speech of the Sanskrit Grammarians, see Bhartṛhari and Iyer (1965), Iyer (1969) and Coward and Raja (1990).

68 *aṅkurākāratāṃ*] em. : *aṅkuśākāratāṃ.* Emended based on parallel passages in VM 4.9 and *Kāmakalāvilasa* 3.

69 Here *kalā* refers to a stage of meditation on *hrīṃ*.

70 For details of specific practices, see Padoux and Jeanty (2013).